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 COME-00 CTME-00 INL-00 DODE-00 DOEE-00 DOTE-00 WHA-00
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RELEASED IN PART
 B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D), B2

S E C R E T OTTAWA 000230

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2014
 TAGS: PREL, PTER, PGOV, CA
 SUBJECT: CANADA: GOC LAUNCHES PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO CANADIAN
 ACTIONS IN MAHER ARAR CASE; PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE TO
 REVIEW RCMP POWERS UNDER OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION STEPHEN R. KELLY, REASON
 1.5 (b) and (d)

1. (U) At a press conference January 28, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Anne McLellan announced the appointment of Associate Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Appeal Dennis O'Connor to undertake a "public inquiry" into the matter of Syrian-Canadian citizen Maher Arar. O'Connor also will make recommendations on an "arm's length" review mechanism for RCMP activities relative to national security. McLellan noted that Justice Minister Irwin Cotler would convene a special parliamentary committee to review Section 4 of the Official Secrets Act, which accords the RCMP broad powers in the context of national security. She reiterated her commitment to create a National Security Committee of Parliamentarians; in the interim, the Prime Minister had offered to swear-in as Privy Councillors opposition party leaders who are MPs (this would exclude NDP Leader Jack Layton), to facilitate their access to findings in the Arar

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
 CLASSIFICATION: SECRET REASON: 1.4(B), 1.4(D)
 DECLASSIFY AFTER: 20 JAN 2024
 DATE/CASE ID: 13 MAY 2009 200706444

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case, including classified information.

2. (C) The Deputy Prime Minister's announcements follow the media uproar over last week's RCMP raid on the home and office of a journalist who had published sensitive information pertaining to the detention in and deportation from the U.S. of Maher Arar in a November 2003 article. Most pundits were caught off guard by the GOC news, having taken the government's moderate response to the RCMP raid as further evidence of its desire to avoid an inquiry into the Arar case. McLellan told journalists that her recommendation for a public inquiry was driven by "the many twists and turns" in the case rather than a particular event.

3.

B1

given the scope of the Arar case, commentators anticipate that the review could last a number of months, in all likelihood beyond national elections in the spring.

4. (C) Meanwhile, at his own press conference two hours later, Maher Arar and his spouse (and lawyer Lorne Waldman) were quick to applaud the government's announcement and to declare their readiness and availability to participate in the public inquiry. Arar helpfully outlined some of the questions he thought should be answered in the process, urging full and complete disclosure of its findings by the government.

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